A Second Discourse OF THE RELIGION OF ENGLAND:

Further Asserting,

That REFORMED CHRISTIANITY,
Setled in its Due Latitude, is the Stability and Advancement of this KINGDOM.

Wherein is included,

An ANSWER to a late Book,

ENTITULED,

A Discourse of *TOLERATION.*

LONDON, Printed in the Year 1668.

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XUM

A Second

DISCOURSE
OF THE
RELIGION of *ENGLAND.*

SECT. I.

Of the Foundation of our Peace already laid in the Religion of the Nation, and the Structure thereof, to be perfected by the Unity of that Profeſſion.

CONcerning Religion in this Kingdom, there have been, and ſtill are great thoughts of heart, and the troubled ſtate thereof hath much diſturbed the Minds of Men, and the whole courſe of Human Affairs. Doubtleſs, Religion it ſelf is not in fault, which in its right and ſound ſtate, being an Inſtitution holy, juſt and good, muſt needs be of great efficacy to compoſe and quiet our minds, and to heal and ſettle the Nations. But that which in it ſelf is Excellent, is by the Errors and Corruptions of men, made ſubject to much vanity. And the Adver-

ſary of Mankind being not able to raze out the deep impreſſions thereof that are in our Nature, hath made it his Maſterpiece ſo to corrupt or diſcompoſe it, as to diſorder the Paſſions of Men, and the Affairs of the World about it.

Concerning the Cure of theſe Diſtempers, and the Redreſs of the Evils thence ariſing, there is no cauſe of Deſpair or Deſpondency, if Men ceaſe from their high Provocations, and God from his righteous Indignation. The moſt effectual means of Reconciliation between the Diſagreeing Parties, is, For all of them to be reconciled to God. Then would that Spirit of Perverſneſs, which by the Divine Diſpleaſure hath been mingled in the midſt of us, be controled and vanquiſhed; and Offences and Prejudices being removed, we might diſcern the Way of Peace. God forbid that Sentence ſhould paſs upon this Generation, *Deſtruction and miſery is in their paths, and the way of peace they have not known.*

Next, under the Divine Favour and Bleſſing, our Help ſtandeth in the Wiſdom and Piety of our SOVEREIGN and His PARLIAMENT. But this Grand Affair is acknowledged to be full of difficulties, cauſed by the Paſſions, Prejudices and Intereſts of the ſeveral Parties. Nevertheleſs, the Prudence and Patience of thoſe that ſit at the Helm of Government, is able to Maſter it: For, the Ground-work of Peace is laid to their hands, in the Religion of the Nation; and the Impartial may deſcry the opportunity of ſuch a Settlement as may accommodate all thoſe Parties in which the Nation's Peace is bound up.

The true Intereſt of Soveraignty, is the ſelf-ſame with that of the Univerſality, or whole Body of the Kingdom; and this is founded in ſuch a Common-Good, as belongs to all ſorts of men, by whom the Publike Weal conſiſts. And where there are, andinevitably will be different Perſwaſions among them, the Wiſdom of the Government is to contract

tract and leſſen their differences, as much as it is poſſible; but, howſoever, to prevent or heal diviſions, and to hold them united among themſelves, in the common Benefit, and all of them neceſſarily dependant upon the State. This is a firm Baſis of the perpetual ſtability of Empire, as alſo of the Subjects Tranquility and Proſperity; and the preſent Diſcourſe reſts upon this Principle as its ſure Foundation.

Now in this Realm, the joint Stock of thoſe ſeveral Parties, for matter of Religion, is *REFORMED CHRISTIANITY*, for which they are all jealous, even unto diſcompoſure, upon any Encroachments of the Popiſh Party. Wherefore, it is the Wiſdom of this Government, to remove or leſſen the Differences, and to cure the Diviſions which now diſturb and divide the Proteſtants, and to hold them united among themſelves, and all of them in firm dependance upon this State, and conſequently, to give them all their due encouragement, not indeed in looſe and irregular wayes, but in a ruled Order, conſiſtent with ſtable Polity, and agreeable to the Government of this Kingdom.

The Ground-work being already laid in the Proteſtant Religion, which is the general and grand Intereſt of this Nation, the Structure and Fabrick of the Unity and Peace of this Realm, is more or leſs perfected, as the Unity of this Profeſſion, and the Peace and Concord of its Profeſſors, is more or leſs acquired. And now this great Queſtion lyes before us, *Whether the Unity of Religion be obtained by requiring a Conformity of Judgment and Practice in matters of perpetual difference from the beginning of the Reformation unto this very day; or, by permitting a latitude of Opinion and Practice in thoſe points; and that not infinite and inordinate, but limited by the Publike Rule.*

SECT.

SECT. II.

The Good of the ſeveral Parties is beſt ſecured by common Equity, and the good of the Univerſality.

HOw happy might the diſpoſition of Human Affairs be, if that were acknowledged in mens Practice, which is moſt clear and obvious to Human Underſtanding, *That things of common Equity and regard to all ſorts, who are neceſſarily included in the Publike State, be preferred by each particular Party, before great Advantages to themſelves apart, with diſregard of all others.* For, all particular Intereſts which are uncorrupt, and will hold firm, are imbarked in the Intereſt of the Univerſality, and muſt ſink or ſwim therewith: Whereupon, not onely the Commonwealth, but the more appropriate Concernments of men, are better ſecured for continuance, by this Moderation and common Equity.

There lye before us the Proteſtant Religion, (which is the true Primitive Chriſtianity) and the Ancient, Equal and Happy Conſtitution of the Government of this Kingdom. The Conſervation and Advancement of both Theſe, are infinitely more valuable than the prevalence of Parties, by all true Proteſtants, and true *Engliſh* men. A publike Spirit is that which is truly pious and generous. But, over and above this Noble and Chriſtian Conſideration, this alſo ſhould be very prevalent, That thoſe Two great things before named, in which all do ſhare, and by which all ſubſiſt, are the Baſis even of the more private and contracted Benefits of the ſeveral Parties; and by diſturbing theſe, they weaken their own hold, and diſturb their own ſafety. Thoſe that hate Moderation, and follow Extremes on either hand, conſider not the true ſtate of *England*. It is an unhappy Error when divided Parties, who when all is done,

done, in their divided ſtate, can be but Parties, and not the Whole, ſhall ſo act in their turns, as if they took themſelves to be the whole Body of the Nation, or equivalent thereunto. And it is a calamitous averſneſs, when ſuch as muſt live together either as Friends or Enemies, ſhall refuſe lawful and ſafe terms of mutual agreement.

As for Conſcience, and its high Concernments, if it be guided by that *Wiſdom which is from above, which is firſt pure, then peaceable*, it puts in no caution againſt the healing of this breach: For, Order and Peace may be obtained upon terms not repugnant to the Principles of either Party. His Majeſty's Wiſdom hath rightly comprehended this matter, in His Declaration concerning Eccleſiaſtical Affairs, where He ſaith, "*We are the rather induced to take this upon Us*, (that is, to give ſome determination to the matters in difference) *by finding upon a full Conference that we have had with the Learned men of ſeveral Perſwaſions, That the Miſchiefs under which both Church and State do at preſent ſuffer, do not reſult from any formed Doctrine or Concluſion which either Party maintains or avows; but from the Paſſion, Appetite, and Intereſt of particular perſons, which contract greater prejudice to each other by thoſe Affections, than would naturally ariſe from their Opinions.* It is apparent, that the avowed Doctrines on either ſide, could not ſet the Parties at this diſtance, if their Spirits and Intereſts were reconciled.

SECT. III.

What may be eſteemed a good Conſtitution of the State Eccleſiaſtical.

AS concerning the publike Order, it imports exceedingly to diſcern and make a difference between things deſirable, but morally impoſſible, or extreamly impro-

improbable, and things neceſſary and attainable. Perfect unanimity about matters of Religion, and a harmony of Opinion in all Theological Truths, is very deſirable; but it was never yet found in any Age of the World, among thoſe that owned the ſame Religion, and conſequently it cannot be neceſſary in all thoſe that ought to be comprehended in the ſame Church, or Religious Communion. For which cauſe, a preciſe Uniformity in matters of meer Opinion, will hardly ever paſs with general ſatisfaction: Neither is it of that importance, that ſome make it to be, for Peace and Edification. There is another thing not onely deſirable, but the indiſpenſable duty of all particular perſons, which is Brotherly Love among all that receive *the common Faith once given to the Saints*. This is of far greater conſequence than the former, and more largely attainable, becauſe it is a Catholick Diſpoſition, and the right Spirit of true Chriſtianity; and indeed, the failing hereof is lamentable and reproachful. Howbeit, this excellent Chriſtian Vertue is commonly much interrupted and impaired in many, by prejudicate Opinions, and depraved Affections; and it muſt not be expected, but that Animoſities and Jealouſies may remain between men of different Perſwaſions, by reaſon of the corruption of man's nature, and the infirmities of the beſt of men. Aud therefore the foundation of a ſolid National Settlement, muſt not, and need not be laid in mens good diſpoſitions and inclinations: For, although the diſtemper of many minds continue, yet publike Order, and ſteddy Government, is in no wiſe impoſſible.

Things are neceſſary, either as the End, or the Means. The things here conſidered, that are neceſſary as the End, are, The Advancement of the Proteſtant Religion, and the Kingdom of *England*, the Tranquility of Church and State, and the Security of all ſound Proteſtants, and good Subjects.

Subjects. That which is neceſſary as the Means, is the Publike Rule and Standard by which theſe bleſſed Ends may be obtained; that, notwithſtanding the remainder of mens Perverſneſs, the common high Concerns of Reformed Religion, and of this Kingdom, be not diſturbed, impaired, or caſt back by the Altercations that may chance to ariſe between men of different private Opinions, and different partial Intereſts. The high Importance and Neceſſity of a ſtated Rule of ſuch Force and Efficacy, evinceth the poſſibility thereof: For, ſo Noble and Neceſſary Ends, cannot be deſtitute of all poſſible Means leading thereunto. Evil Diſpoſitions and Manners are the riſe of Good Laws: And Law-makers, that are ſubject to like paſſions with other men, have the Wiſdom to limit themſelves and others, for the Univerſal Good, wherein the good of every Individual is ſecured.

The Publike Rule being to be framed to the proportion of the People that are to be ſetled under it, the chief regard muſt be had to their fixed and unmovable Perſwaſions and Inclinations, leſt They ſhould break the Rule, or the Rule break them. In a Nation whoſe Active Part is zealous of Religion, and able to diſcern, and addicted to diſcourſe the Grounds thereof, the Order of Things ought, in the firſt place, to be directed to the ſatisfying of the Juſt and Reaſonable Demands of Conſcience, which being troubled, is a reſtleſs thing; and then to the outward Incouragements of Piety and Learning, and withall, to the bridling of Ambition, Avarice, Faction, and all depraved Appetite. It muſt be expected, That divers Obliquities and Deficiencies may remain, and Troubles will ariſe: but if that which is Wholeſom and Good, be ſo predominant as to Maſter the Evils, though not to extinguiſh them, it is to be eſteemed a Good Conſtitution.

SECT. IV.

The Comprehenſiveneſs of the Eſtabliſhment, and the Allowance of a juſt Latitude of Diſſents, is the beſt Remedy againſt Diſſentions.

THere was lately publiſhed a Diſcourſe for a due Latitude in Religion, by Comprehenſion, Toleration and Connivence, directed to this End, That the occaſions of thoſe Diſcords which divide the Members, and diſtract the whole Body of the Proteſtant Profeſſion, might ceaſe; and that the common Concernments, wherein the diſagreeing Parties have a large joint Stock in things of greateſt moment, might be purſued. This is encountred with an adverſe Diſcourſe, which is here to be examined, and the ſtate and reaſon of the aforeſaid Latitude, is to be further cleared.

Toleration being commonly underſtood of the permiſſion of different ways of Religion, without the Line of the Approved Way, *A Diſcourſe of Toleration* doth not hit *the Diſcourſe of the Religion of England*, in the main thereof, whoſe chief Deſign is the Extenſion of the Eſtabliſhed Order, and the Moderation therein required; and then Toleration is treated of analogically, with reſpect not only to common Charity, but to the Safety of the ſetled Polity. It is no leſs beſides the mark, to argue from the Miſchiefs of a boundleſs and licentious Toleration, againſt that which is Limited and well Managed, and hath for the Subject thereof, nothing that is intolerable.

But, if under this Name be comprehended alſo the Permiſſion of diverſity of Opinion in the ſame Eſtabliſhed Order, let it be conſidered, Whether any ample Polity can conſiſt without ſuch Permiſſion. For, it is a thing utterly unknown, and ſeems morally impoſſible, for any numerous

numerous Society of Inquiring men, to be of the ſame judgment in all points of Religion. And though the *Sons of the Church*, as they are called, agree in thoſe points wherein they all differ from the *Nonconformiſts*, yet they differ among themſelves in far weightier Matters, and ſuch as have cauſed great Schiſms, and have been the ſubjects of the Debates and Determinations of ſome Synods in the Reformed Churches. Now if Charity among themſelves, and their appropriate Intereſt, diſpoſe them to this mutual forbearance, a more extenſive Charity, and the common Intereſt of Reformed Chriſtianity, ſhould incline them to a forbearance in thoſe other matters.

There is yet a greater Error committed about *the Subject of Toleration*, which the *Anſwerer*, by miſtake, will have to be *Diſſentions in Religion*, but is nothing ſo in the deſign of that Diſcourſe to which he pretends an Anſwer. And this hath brought forth a large Impertinency, which takes up more than a third part of his Book: For, thoſe whoſe Liberty He ſeeks to withſtand, are not touched with that which he writes at large of the nature of Diſſentions, with their Cauſes and Conſequences, and the Magiſtrates duty concerning them, whether it be right or wrong, ſetting aſide the injurious application thereof. And all that labour had been ſpared, if he had put a difference between *Diſſention* and *Diſſent*, words that are near in ſound, and perhaps, ſometimes, promiſcuouſly uſed; but in their ſtrict and proper ſenſe, far diſtant: For, *Diſſention* is no ſooner preſented to the mind, but it is apprehended as ſomething either culpable and offenſive, or calamitous and unhappy: But *Diſſent* is of a better notion, and is not neceſſarily on both ſides, either a Fault or a Grievance. But if this Author means by Diſſentions, no more then diſſents or differences of Opinion, with what truth and juſtice can he charge them all (as he doth) with ſuch execrable Cauſes

and Effects. Diſſentions have been, and may be remedied, and their fuel being taken away, thoſe flames will be extinguiſhed: But diverſity of Opinion ſeems in this ſtate of Human Nature, to be irremediable. It is therefore hoped, that the ſtate of this Church and Kingdom is not ſo deplorable, as to want a Settlement while theſe Diſſents remain. Moreover, there are private diſſents between particular men, within the latitude of the Publike Rule; and there are diſſents that may be called Publike, as being from the Publike Rule, or ſome parts thereof. Now the broader and more comprehenſive the Rule is, the fewer will be the Diſſenters from it. And the permiſſion of private diverſities of Opinion, in a juſt Latitude within the Rule, is the means to leſſen Publike Diſſents, and conſequently, Diſſentions much more. And this was the main ſcope of the firſt *Diſcourſe*.

The great importance of *Unity in the Church of Chriſt*, is acknowledged and contended for as much on this ſide, as on the other: Howbeit, we do not believe that Chriſt our Head hath laid the Conſervation and Unity of His Church, upon unwritten and unneceſſary Doctrines, and little Opinions, and Sacred Rites and Ceremonies of meer Human Tradition and Inſtitution. But He hath ſet out the Rule and Meaſure of Unity in ſuch ſort, as that upon Diſſents in thoſe things, the Members of this Society might not break into Schiſms, to a mutual condemnation and abhorrency. The impoſing of ſuch things (except in thoſe Ages whoſe Blindneſs and Barbariſm diſpoſed them to ſtupidity and groſs ſecurity in their Religion) hath been ever found to break Unity, and to deſtroy, or much impair Charity, Goodneſs, Meekneſs and Patience, which are Vital Parts, and chief Excellencies of Chriſtianity.

SECT.

SECT. V.

Whether the preſent Diſſentions are but ſo many Factions in the State.

ONE grand Objection is, *That the Diſſentions among us, are but ſo many ſeveral Factions in the State.* But, meer diſſents in Religion, are no State-Factions at all, but proceed from a more laſting Cauſe, than particular Deſigns, or any temporary Occaſions, even from the incurable Infirmity of our Nature. And if it were granted, That the Diſſentions were State-Factions; yet, they are not ſo originally and radically, but by accident. Some may take advantage to raiſe and keep up Factions by them. For this cauſe, take out of the way the ſtumbling-block of needleſs rigors, and then Diſſentions will ceaſe or languiſh, and conſequently, the State Factions (if there be any ſuch that are kept up by them) will come to nothing.

It is ſo evident, that *Toleration*, which came not in till after the breach between the Late King and Parliament, *did not open the avenues to our Miſeries*, that one may wonder any ſhould ſay it did. But, meet Indulgence to all ſound Proteſtants, is the likelieſt means of ſtopping ſuch avenues. And, *if it be for the Intereſt of England to have no Factions*, the beſt way is to remove thoſe burdens, which, like a partition-wall, hath kept aſunder the Profeſſors of the ſame Religion: Then *the Maſters of our Troubles* (whoſoever they be) *cannot have that advantage by their Eminency in their Parties, to drive on their Deſigns in the State.* Factious Spirits are diſappointed, when Honeſt Minds are ſatisfied and ſecured.

This Author relates the Aims of ſeveral Parties on this manner: *The Papiſts are for the Supremacy of the Biſhop of* Rome; *ſome of the other Sects are for a Commonwealth; others*

others are for the Fift Monarchy. But, if the true ſtate of the *Nonconformiſts* be well conſidered, it will be found, that in Them, as well as any others, the King and Kingdom is concerned, and the good of Both promoted. It is not with them, as with the Popiſh Party, who have ſuch a ſevered Intereſt to themſelves, that the State is little concerned in it, ſave onely to beware of its Incroachments. But the Proteſtant Diſſenters, are ſuch as do much of the Buſineſs of the Nation, and have not their Intereſt apart, but in ſtrict conjunction with the whole Body-Politick. Yea, they have no poſſible means of enſuring their Intereſt, but by Legal-Security obtained from the Higher Power, and by comporting with the general tranquility both of the Church and State of *England*. They cannot flye to the Refuge of any Foreign Prince or State, (as the *Papiſts* have done frequently) they acknowledg no Foreign Juriſdiction, (which is a Principle of the *Popiſh Faith*) but all their Stake lies at home, and they can have no ſure Hold that is aliene from the Happineſs of the King and Kingdom. An Impartial Obſerver cannot but diſcern this. If it be lawful to name a thing ſo much to be abhorred, as a Change of the Ancient Laws and Government, they could not be happy, nor do their Work by ſuch an unhappy Change. Experience witneſſeth, That their Intereſt is not for haſty and unſtable Victory, or unfixed Liberty; but, for a ſtate of firm Conſiſtence and Security; and that they cannot hold their own, but by the common Safety both of Prince and People.

The ſumm of this Matter is, That a Party not onely comporting with the good Eſtate of this Realm, but even ſubſiſting by it, and therefore firmly linked unto it, ſhould not be caſt off.

SECT.

SECT. VI.

Whether the NONCONFORMISTS Principles tend to Sects and Schisms.

SOme Reasons were offered to shew, That Indulgence towards Dissenting Protestants, did much concern the Peace and Happiness of this Realm. And the Prudent will judg Arguments of that sort to be of the greatest weight in the Affairs of Government. There is no need to reinforce the cogency of those Reasons: The Adversary hath wrested them to an odious meaning, contrary to their manifest true intent; but whether he hath indeed evinced them to be of little or no moment; or, whether they stand in full force, let judicious men consider. The whole reasoning in that particular, rests upon this Maxime, That it is the SOVEREIGN's true Interest, to make his divided People to be one among themselves, and to keep them all in dependance upon Himself, as the Procurer of their common safety.

The Prejudices that have been conceived, and the Calumnies that have been raised against the *Nonconformists*, gave occasion of resolving this Question, *Whether they be of a judgment and temper that makes them capable of being brought under the Magistrates Paternal Care and Conduct, to such a stated Order as will comport with this Church and Kingdom?* This, by the *Answerer*, is termed *a Dialect of Canting*, and is wilfully wrested into a Question of another nature. Whether he had occasion given him to speak so scornfully, let any judg that understand sober language. But, that they might appear uncapable of a Comprehension, he sticks not to affirm, *That the Principles of Presbyterian Perswasion, do not admit of any stability, but may be drawn out to patronize the wildest Sects that are or have been.* And his main

main proof is taken from the bare word of Two of their Eminent Adversaries. He might have remembred, That the same Reproach is cast upon the Principles of *Protestantism*, by *Romish* Writers. One may well ask, Where is the Truth and Candor of those men that write after this manner? Consider the *French*, *Dutch*, *Helvetian* Churches, how intire they keep themselves in Orthodox Unity, from the Gangrene of Sects and Schisms. The Church of *Scotland*, whilst it was *Presbyterian*, was inferior to none in the Unity of Doctrine and Church-Communion. Did *Prelacy* ever effect the like Unity in the Church of *England*? And shall the Sects that now are, or lately were in this Nation, be charged upon *Presbytery*, that was never setled among us; and against which the Sectaries had the greatest indignation? Though that Way never obtained in *England*, nor was favoured with the Magistrates vigorous aid, yet it is very untrue, *that the first admirers and friends thereof, grew sick of it, and hissed for the other Sects to affront, reproach and baffle it.* It is well known, that it received those disgraces from another sort of men.

The asserting of this Government, is far from the design of this or the former Treatise; yet it may be lawful to vindicate it from unjust aspersions. The *Answerer* is pleased to stile it, *No other but a Sect.* I hope he doth not intend to make the Foreign Reformed Churches, but so many Combinations of Sectaries. If his meaning be, that is no better than a Sect in *England*, *because another Government is established by Law*, let him tell us, Whether *Episcopacy* would be a Sect, if it should appear in those Countries where *Presbytery* is the Legal Government? No less will follow, if the Notion of Sect be extended so far, as to fetch in whatsoever dissents from the Order by Law established.

SECT.

SECT. VII.

Of their Principles touching OBEDIENCE and GOVERNMENT.

ANother great Prejudice taken up againſt the *Nonconformiſts*, is, That they are inconſiſtent with any Regular Government: And this Author reports, that it is a common Maxime among the Diſſenters, *That an Indifferent Thing becomes Unlawful by being Commanded.* But let the World hear them ſpeak for themſelves out of their *Account to His Majeſty concerning the Review and Alteration of the Liturgy.*

"We humbly beſeech Your Majeſty to believe, That "we own no Principles of Faction or Diſobedience, nor "patronize the Errors or Obſtinacy of any. It is granted "us by all, That nothing ſhould be commanded us by man, "which is contrary to the Word of God: That, if it be, "and we know it, we are bound not to perform it, God "being the Abſolute Univerſal Sovereign: That we muſt "uſe all juſt means to diſcern the Will of God, and whe-"ther the Commands of Men be contrary to it: That, if "the Command be ſinful, and any through neglect of ſuf-"ficient ſearch, ſhould judg it Lawful, his culpable Error "excuſeth not his doing it, from being ſin: And there-"fore as a reaſonable creature muſt needs have a judg-"ment of diſcerning, that he may rationally obey it; "ſo is he with the greateſt care and diligence, to exerciſe it "in the greateſt things, even the obeying of God, and the "ſaving of his Soul: And that where a ſtrong probability "of a great Sin and Danger lieth before us, we muſt not "raſhly run on without ſearch: And that to go on againſt "Conſcience where it is miſtaken, is ſin and danger to him "that erreth. And on the other ſide, we are remembred,

"that in things no way againſt the Law of God, the Com-
"mands of our Governors muſt be obeyed; but if they
"command what God forbids, we muſt patiently ſubmit
"to ſuffering, and every ſoul muſt be ſubject to the Higher
"Powers for Conſcience ſake, and not reſiſt: The Pub-
"like Judgment, Civil or Eccleſiaſtical, belongeth only
"to publike perſons, and not to any private man: That
"no man muſt be be cauſleſly or pragmatically inquiſitive
"into the reaſons of his Superiors Commands; nor by
"Pride and Self-conceitedneſs, exalt his own underſtand-
"ing above its Worth and Office; but all to be modeſtly
"and humbly ſelf-ſuſpicious: That none muſt erroneouſly
"pretend to God's Law, againſt the juſt Command of his
"Superiors, nor pretend the doing of his duty to be a ſin:
"That he who ſuſpecteth his Superiors Commands to be
"againſt Gods Laws, muſt uſe all means for full informa-
"tion, before he ſettle in a courſe of diſobeying them:
"And that he who indeed diſcovereth any thing comman-
"ded, to be a ſin; though he muſt not do it, muſt manage
"his Opinion with very great care and tenderneſs of the
"Publike Peace, and the honour of his Governors. Theſe
"are our Principles: If we are otherwiſe repreſented to
"Your Majeſty, we are miſ-repreſented: If we are accu-
"ſed of contradicting them, we humbly crave that we may
"not be condemned before we be heard.

This is ſound ſpeech that cannot be reproved. Where-
fore if the Clemency of their Superiors ſhall remit thoſe
Injunctions that may wellbe diſpenſed with, and unto which
they cannot yeeld conformity for fear leſt they ſin againſt
God; their Principles will diſpoſe them with an humble
and thankful acquieſcence, to receive ſo great a Be-
nefit.

SECT.

SECT. VIII.

Of placing them in the ſame rank for Crime and Guilt, with the PAPISTS.

THE *Anſwerer* hath not feared to ſet the *Papiſts*, and the *Proteſtant Diſſenters*, upon the ſame level, in the guilt of Rebellion, Cruelty and Turbulency. For a high Charge having been made good againſt *Popery*, *That it diſpoſeth Subjects to Rebellion: That it perſecutes all other Religions within its reach: That whereſoever it finds encouragement, it is reſtleſs, till it bear down all, or hath put all in diſorder:* He comes and tells the World, That the *Nonconformiſts are no more innocent of the ſame Crimes.* Can men of ſound minds and temperate ſpirits, believe this? And what greater advantage can be given the *Popiſh Party*, then that a *Proteſtant Writer* ſhould declare and publiſh, that ſo great a part of *Proteſtants* are equally involved with them in thoſe heinous Crimes with which the *Proteſtants* have always charged them? And that ſuch a one ſhould tell them, *That it will ſeem unequal to deny a Toleration to them, and grant it unto others that are here pleaded for*; which is in effect to ſay, They have as good reaſon to expect an Indulgence from this State, as others that maintain the Doctrine of the Church of *England*, yea, ſuch as communicate in her publike Worſhip. Is there no better way of exalting *Prelacy*, and diſgracing its ſuppoſed Adverſaries, then by this Reproach and Damage done to the whole *Proteſtant* Profeſſion? Yea, he ſo far extenuates the guilt of *Papiſts*, and brings it down ſo low, as to make it common to all other Sects. In which one would think he ſhould have been more wary, who in one place ſtretcheth the notion of *Sect* ſo far, as to make its reaſon to lye in being different from the Eſtabliſhed Form of Church Government. Now

for matter of practice, he imputes the same guilt to all other Sects; *And if the Papists* (saith he) *have any Doctrines which countenance those Practises, that is to be accounted as the issue of their insolency in their own greatness.* And he implies, That it is onely the want of strength, that other Sects are not so bad as they for such kind of Doctrine, as well as Practice. Such passages falling from a *Protestants* Pen, may do the *Papists* better service than their late Apology. But why doth he say, *If the Papists have any such Doctrines?* Doth he not know they have? The Church of *England* was assured of it, when concerning the Adherents of *Rome*, she used this expression in a publike form of Prayer, *Whose Religion is Rebellion, and whose Faith is Faction.* We wish their eyes were open, who cannot see more permanent and effectual causes of the aforesaid Crimes peculiar to that Religion, and rooted in the Principles thereof. The evidence hereof given in the former *Discourse*, is not needful to be rehersed in this place.

This Author (as others that oppose the wayes of Amity and Peace) loves to grate upon a string that sounds harsh, To renew the remembrance of the late Warr. Those distracted Times, are the great Storehouse and Armory, out of which such men do fetch their Weapons of offence; and the great Strong-hold, unto which they always retreat when they are vanquished by the force of Reason, and then they think they are safe, though therein they contradict the true intent of the Act of Oblivion. Some of those that now so importunately urge the Injury and Tyranny of those Times, did then sufficiently comply with Usurpers; and left *Episcopacy* to sink or swim; and did partake of the chiefest Favours and Preferments that were then conferred. And on the other hand, such as they upbraid, and are now Sufferers, did as little comply with those that subverted the Government, and did as zealously appear for

for the reſcue of our late Sovereign, and for the reſtitution of His preſent Majeſty, as any ſort of men in the Realm. But to intermeddle in the Differences of thoſe Times, and to repeat Odious Matters, and to uſe Recriminations that will diſturb the minds of men, and tend to a perpetual Miſchief, is aliene from, and oppoſite unto my Pacifick Endeavours. As for his charging the *Nonconformiſts* with certain Doctrines and Poſitions by him there mentioned (which I know none that maintains) and other Accuſations and Reports relating to the time of the Warr; the Truth or Falſhood, the Equity or Iniquity, the Candor or Diſingenuity of his Teſtimony in thoſe things, is left to the judgment of the Righteous God, and of Impartial Men.

SECT. IX.

Whether their Inconformity be Conſcientious or Wilful.

ANother part of the Proceeding is very Unrighteous and Preſumptuous. The Diſſenting Miniſters appeal to God, That they dare not Conform for Conſcience ſake. This Author hence inferrs, *The force of the Argument is, There is a Neceſſity of Toleration, becauſe they Will not conform. Is a Cannot for Conſcience ſake*, of no more force than a bare *Will not*? But who beſt knows their hearts, themſelves or their Adverſaries? He would make the world believe, that not Conſcience, but Obſtinacy and Faction, is the cauſe of their holding out, *and that the greateſt part were trapann'd into Nonconformity*. That trifling ſtory of their being trapann'd, is not worthy of ſerious diſcourſe. It is ſo evident, as not to be denied, That about the time the Act of Uniformity was to be put in practice, there were motions and overtures of Indulgence from the King and ſome of the great Officers of State, who were known to have high affection and eſteem for the Church of *England*, yet did approve

prove and promote those Overtures as the best Expedient for the setling of this Church and Kingdom. But to let that pass, Can men of Understanding and Candor think, that so many serious persons, who as well as others, may be thought to love themselves, their Families and Relations, should continue such egregiously obstinate Fools, as to refuse the Comforts of their Temporal Being, for a Humor, and remain in a state of Deprivation, into which they had been meerly trapann'd? As for the objected *unprofitableness of their returning*, how doth it appear? What hinders their Capacity of gaining Benefices, yea and Dignities, if they could Conform? Why should they not find as good acceptation as others, in their Preaching and Conversation? It may be they would enter too fast, for the good liking of some, into those Preferments, who therefore would set such Barrs against them, as they should not be able to break thorough.

SECT. X.

Of their peaceable Inclinations, and readiness to be satisfied.

IN the late Times of Usurpation, there were apparent predispositions in this sort of men to Peace and Concord. The longing desire and expectation that was in them, as much as in any others, of a National Settlement, and general Composure, did accelerate His Majesty's Peaceable Restauration. Surely they were not so stupid as to imagine that great Turn of Affairs, without the thoughts of their own yeilding, and such as they hoped would be effectual with those of the other Perswasion. Their early and ready Overtures of Reconciliation, which are publikely made known, will testifie their Moderation, to the present and future Ages. Their Offers of Acquiescing in *Episcopacy* Regulated, and the *Liturgy* Reformed, was on their part, a good

good advance towards Union. His Majeſty hath given this Teſtimony of them in His Declaration: *When We were in* Holland, *We were attended by many Grave and Learned Miniſters from hence, who were looked upon as the moſt able and principal Aſſertors of the* Presbyterian *Opinions, with whom We had as much Conference as the multitude of Affairs which were then upon Us, would permit Us to have; and to Our great Satisfaction and Comfort, found them perſons full of Affection to Us, of Zeal for the Peace of the Church and State, and neither Enemies (as they had been given out to be) to* Epiſcopacy *or* Liturgy, *but modeſtly to deſire ſuch alterations as without ſhaking Foundations, might beſt allay the preſent Diſtempers which the indiſpoſition of the Time, and the tenderneſs of ſome mens Conſciences had contracted.*

I wonder at the confidence of that Aſſertion in the *Anſwer, That it is ſufficiently known, That none of the preſent Nonconformiſts did in the leaſt meaſure agree in the uſe of thoſe little things; and though deſired by the King to read ſo much of the Liturgy as themſelves had not exception againſt, and ſo could have no pretence from Conſcience.* For it is well known, that ſome of them did in compliance with the Kings deſire, read part of the Liturgy in their Churches. As for others that did not, perhaps for the prevention of ſcandal they might uſe their liberty of forbearance till ſome Reformation were obtained. The truth is, the Conceſſions on this ſide have been abuſed, to the reproach and diſadvantage of the depreſſed Party; and from their readineſs to yeild ſo far as they can, for the common peace ſake, a perverſe inference is made, That they might yeild throughout, if Humor and Faction did not rule them. Is there any Juſtice or Charity in ſuch dealing? May not men of upright Conſciences, and peaceable Inclinations, forbear the inſiſting upon ſome things to them very deſirable, and give place to ſome things not approved by them as the beſt in that kind,

if

if ſo be they might obtain their Peace and Liberty, by Indulgence granted them in other things, wherein Conſcience binds them up that they cannot yeild? Moreover, ſome Conceſſions made by particular men of very Catholick ſpirits, in the earneſt purſuit of Peace, have been wrack'd and wreſted to a ſenſe beyond their true import; and then they that ſo handle them, triumph in their own conceit, over them, as if they had given up the whole Cauſe. Certainly they are ill employed, who from their Brethrens yeelding offers, raiſe Oppoſition againſt them, and endeavour to ſet them further off.

SECT. XI.

The propounded Latitude leaves out nothing neceſſary to ſecure the Church's Peace.

TO ſet forth the propounded Latitude in the particular Limits thereof, is not agreeable to a Diſcourſe of this nature: For it were preſumptuous both in reference to Superiors, and to the Party concerned in it. And it is unneceſſary; for Prejudices being removed, and the Conveniency of a greater Latitude being acknowledged, the particular Boundaries thereof will eaſily be deſcried: And indeed, the generals that are expreſſed, are a ſufficient indication thereunto. His Majeſty's Declaration concerning Eccleſiaſtical Affairs, hath mentioned particular Conceſſions on both ſides, and that Harmony of Affections therein, He calls excellent Foundations to build upon. The Moderation and Indulgence there ſpecified, would do the work; I mean not ſo as if all Diſſenters would inſtantly be thereby brought in; but that our wide breach would preſently be healed in great part, and be in the ſureſt way for a total and abſolute healing; and ſo much would be gained at preſent, as might be able to conquer the remaining Difficulties.

The

The former *Diſcourſe* had this poſition, That the Ends of Church-Diſcipline do not require a Conſtitution of narrower bounds, then things neceſſary to Faith and Life, and Godly Order in the Church. The *Anſwerer* ſaith, That *this Eſtabliſhment is not enough for a Settlement, becauſe it doth not ſecure the Peace.* And to ſhew the inſufficiency thereof, he giveth two inſtances of Diſcord between the Parties; Firſt, about *the Perſons to whoſe Care the great things of Chriſtianity ſhould be intruſted to ſee them conveyed unto Poſterity, whether they ſhall be a Single Perſon, or a Conſiſtory, or each ſingle Congregation.* Secondly, About *the means of conveying thoſe things, the Worſhip of God, and the Circumſtances thereof.* From hence he draws this Concluſion, *Therefore to preſerve Peace among her Members, the Church had need to determine more then the great things of Chriſtianity; and to injoyn more then what is barely neceſſary to Faith and Order.* Verily, it may much amuſe one to think what that thing ſhould be in the Eccleſiaſtical Polity, which is not neceſſary to Chriſtian Faith and Life, and godly Order in the Church, and yet neceſſary to ſecure the Church's Peace. And if the aforeſaid Inſtances of diſcord between the *Church of England* and the *Diſſenters* are not neceſſary to Faith or Order, what reaſon can be rendred of the inexorable Impoſition thereof, upon diſſenting or doubting Conſciences? Can it be neceſſary to the Church's Peace, to exclude or deprive men for ſuch Differences in which neither Faith nor Order are concerned? Or is this the *Anſwerer*'s meaning, That the Church's Peace conſiſts in the excluſion of the *Nonconformiſts*; and that the neceſſary uſe of ſome Injunctions, ſtands in keeping them out; ſo that not their Conformity, but their Excluſion is the thing therby intended?

The Comprehenſion doth not ſuppoſe (as it is miſ-reported) *That Presbytery ſhould be permitted or encouraged.* All

intermedling with the Form of Church-Government, was declined; only the preſcribed Uniformity was conſidered. Beſides, for the exact *Presbyterial* Form to be comprehended in *Epiſcopacy*, is contradictory; yet that ſomething of *Presbytery* ſhould be included in it, is not repugnant. And ſuch a Comprehenſion is approved in His Majeſty's aforeſaid Declaration. Likewiſe King *CHARLES* the Firſt, in His Diſcourſe touching the Differences between Himſelf and the Two Houſes, in this point, declares that *He is not againſt the managing of the Epiſcopal Preſidency in one man, by the joint Counſel and Conſent of many Presbyters; but that He had offered to reſtore it as a fit means to avoid thoſe errors, and corruptions and partialities which are incident to any one man; alſo to avoid Tyranny, which becomes no Chriſtians, leaſt of all Church-men.* But neither this nor the former Treatiſe, interpoſeth in this Matter, but leaves it to the Wiſdom of our Superiors.

The deſired Latitude leaves not the Concernments of Church or State *to the Ingenuity of Men*, nor caſts out any Injunctions that are means of Peace and Unity; yea, or of that neceſſary Decency which the Apoſtle requires; only of Rites and Opinions long diſputed, it would take in no more then needs muſt; and not meerly becauſe they have been long diſputed, but becauſe they are alſo of little value, (and here confeſſed not to be neceſſary to Faith and Order) yet are matters of endleſs Controverſie in this Church, and occaſions of great ſeparation from it.

It being aſſerted, That the indiſputable Truths of Faith, and the indiſpenſable Duties of Life, are the main Object of Church-Diſcipline, the *Anſwerer* demands, *What are thoſe indiſputable Truths, ſince there is ſcarce any Truth of Faith that hath not been diſputed againſt?* What manner of arguing is this? Becauſe All Truths have been diſputed, doth it follow, that there are no indiſputable Truths? That is

is called Indiſputable, that cannot reaſonably or juſtly be diſputed, though men of corrupt minds, and reprobate concerning the Faith, will call the greateſt Truths in queſtion, and reſiſt the cleareſt Evidence. When the Apoſtle mentions matters of doubtful diſputations, he implies there be matters that are indubitable.

SECT. XII.

Of acquieſcence in the Commands of Superiors, and the proper matter of their Injunctions.

IN the former Treatiſe this Argument was uſed. The Church doth not claim an Infallibility, therefore ſhe cannot ſettle the Conſcience by her ſole Warrant, but ſtill leaves room for doubting. The *Anſwerer* makes this to be either a piece of ignorance, or *of portentous malice*, and an Aſſertion *that would diſturb all Government both in Families and in the State, that would confound all Society, and extirpate Faith and Juſtice from among the ſons of men.* But this his ſtrange Inference rather is portentous. That the Church cannot ſettle the Conſcience by her ſole Warrant, is it not a Principle maintained by all *Proteſtants* in oppoſition to the *Popiſh* implicit Faith, and blind Obedience? But is this perſon conſiſtent with himſelf? For after he hath a while expatiated in his imaginary hideous Conſequences, he comes himſelf to deny that the Church bindeth the Conſcience by her own Authority. And yet it is a leſſer thing to *bind* the Conſcience, than to *ſettle it, and leave no room for doubting.* For Conſcience may be obliged, when it is not ſetled. And if the Church cannot oblige, doubtleſs ſhe cannot ſettle the Conſcience by her ſole Authority. How then could a man of reaſon draw ſuch hideous Inferences from that Poſition? If I may give way to conjectures, I ſuſpect that he might take check at the word *Infallibility*, by

which I intend no more then Infallible Direction; and I fear not to own this Aſſertion, That whoſoever have not Infallible Direction, or the certain aſſiſtance of an Infallible Guide, ſo as to be exempted from all error in what they propound for Belief or Practice, cannot ſettle the Conſcience by their ſole warrant.

I ſtill aver, That in preſcribed Forms and Rites of Religion, the Conſcience that doth its office, will interpoſe and concern it ſelf. And it is matter of aſtoniſhment that a Learned *Proteſtant* ſhould ſay, this Poſition muſt needs be falſe. For Conſcience guided by the fear of God, will uſe all juſt means to diſcern his Will, and cannot reſign it ſelf to the dictates of men in the points of Divine Worſhip. If the Judgment of Diſcerning, which makes men differ from Brutes, be to be exerciſed in any caſe, it is chiefly requiſite in theſe matters wherein the Glory of God, and the Saving of the Soul is ſo much concerned.

It is granted, That to maintain Peace and Unity in the Church, and to be obedient to the Higher Powers in thoſe things which are proper matter for their Commands, are moſt ſtrictly injoined Duties. But the Injunctions here conſidered (though to the Impoſers they are but things Indifferent, that is, neither Commanded nor Forbidden of God) in the Conſciences of Diſſenters, are Unlawful. To inſtance in ſome controverted Ceremonies, They think that God hath determined againſt them, though not in particular, yet in the general Prohibition of all uncommanded Worſhip. And they reply, *Whether it be right in the ſight of God to hearken unto men more then unto God, judg ye.* To reſtrain that of the Apoſtle, *He that doubts is damned if he eat*, only to things wherein the Church hath not interpoſed her Authority, is a falſe gloſs, and a begging of the Queſtion. What human Authority can warrant any one to put in practice an unlawful or ſuſpected Action, or to make profeſſion

feſſion of a known or ſuſpected Falſhood? As concerning the Rights of Superiors, it is the Church's Duty and Honour to teach and command her Children to do whatſoever Chriſt hath commanded. And it is the chiefeſt Glory, and moſt proper Work of the Magiſtrate, who is Gods Miniſter and Vicegerent, to be *cuſtos & vindex utriuſq; Tabulæ*, To incourage and inforce Obedience to the Divine Laws, whether written in the Bible, or imprinted in our Nature; and in ſubſerviency thereunto, to have power to determine ſuch things as are requiſite in the general, but in the particulars are left undetermined of God, and are to be ordered by Human Prudence, according to the Light of Nature, and the general Rules of Gods Word. But things indifferent in their nature, and either offenſive in their uſe, or needleſs and ſuperfluous, are not worthy to be made *the proper matter of his Commands*. It is a grave and weighty ſaying of a Learned man (of whatſoever Perſwaſion he were) "If the ſpecial Guides and Paſtors of the Church, "would be a little ſparing of incumbring Churches with "ſuperfluities, or not over-rigid, either in reviving obſolete "Cuſtoms, or impoſing new, there would be far leſs cauſe of "Schiſm and Superſtition; and all the inconvenience that "were likely to enſue, would be but this, That in ſo do-"ing they ſhould yeeld a little to the imbecillity of their "Inferiors; a thing which St. *Paul* would never have refu-"ſed to do.

SECT. XIII.

Of the alledged Reaſons of the Eccleſiaſtical Injunctions in the beginning of the Reformation.

THE *Anſwerer* relates at large the proceeding of this Church in the beginning of the Reformation. The ſum of the Relation is, *That there being Two ſorts of men, one*

one that thought it a great matter of Conſcience to depart from the leaſt Ceremony, they were ſo addicted to their old Cuſtoms; the other ſo new-fangled, that they would innovate all things, and nothing would ſatisfie them but that which was new; It was neceſſary for the Church to interpoſe for Peace ſake, and caſting off neither Party, to pleaſe each to their edification; and alſo to injoyn ſome things to the common obſervance of all, and therefore ſhe took away the exceſſive multitude of Ceremonies, as thoſe that were dark, and abuſed to Superſtition and Covetouſneſs, but retained thoſe few that were for Decency, Diſcipline, and apt to ſtir up the dull mind of man to the remembrance of his duty to God. We have good warrant to call in queſtion the truth of his Narration in things of the greateſt weight. Firſt, It is not true that *the Party that were for Ceremonies, comprehended all thoſe who ſtaid at home, and did not flye in the time of Queen* Mary's *Perſecution.* For ſuch as diſſented from the Ceremonies in the time of that Perſecution, had their Aſſemblies for the Worſhip of God in this Land, and indured among others, in that Fiery Trial. And we can find but little zeal in the Martyrs of thoſe days for this kind of Conformity. Likewiſe it is not true *that the Party that were againſt Ceremonies, were but ſmall, as being but ſome few of thoſe that fled beyond Sea:* There is clear evidence to the contrary. An Hiſtorian zealous for Conformity, even unto bitterneſs, reports in his *Eccleſia Reſtaurata*, That in the beginning of Queen *Elizabeth*'s Reign, many that were diſaffected to *Epiſcopacy* and Ceremonies, were raiſed to great Preferments. Beſides, thoſe that were in Eccleſiaſtical Dignities, he obſerves, That the Queens Profeſſor at *Oxford*, and the *Margaret* Profeſſor in *Cambridg*, were among the *Nonconformiſts.* For the multitude of *Diſſenters* in thoſe dayes, there is a notable teſtimony of a Friend of *Prelacy*, in his Letter to Mr. *Richard Hooker*, about the writing of his *Eccleſiaſtical Polity*,

in

in theſe words: *It may be remembred, that at the firſt the greateſt part of the Learned in the Land, were either eagerly affected, or favourably inclined to that way; the Books then written, ſavoured for the moſt part, of the Diſciplinary ſtile; it ſounded every where in the Pulpits, and in the common phraſe of mens ſpeech; and the contrary Part began to fear they had taken a wrong courſe.*

There is as little Truth and Juſtice in that report, *That the Party that were againſt Ceremonies, cauſed the Troubles at* Frankford, *and brought a Diſhonor to the Reformation, and Infamy upon our Nation.* The *Engliſh* Congregation at *Frankford*, was ſetled after the Diſcipline of the Foreign Reformed Churches, and enjoyed much Peace, till certain eminent men, zealous of the *Engliſh* Forms and Rites, came among them, and by a high hand brought in the Liturgy, and brake them to pieces, and forced away the Miniſters, and thoſe Members that were in the firſt forming and ſetling of that Church. Afterward, they that remained and received the Liturgy, continued not long in unity, but in a ſhort time an incurable and ſcandalous Schiſm brake out between the Paſtor, and almoſt the whole Congregation.

Laſtly, There is a great miſtake in the main buſineſs of the Narrative, in repreſenting things as ſetled by the Church of *England* in the beginning of the Queen's Reign, to pleaſe each Party in the aboliſhing of ſome, and the retaining of other Ceremonies: Whereas at the reviving the Reformation at that time, the Ceremonies then aboliſhed were offenſive to all Proteſtants, and nothing appears to be done in favour of the *Anticeremonial* Party, about the points in difference. But things were carried to a greater height againſt their Way, than in King *Edward*'s time, whoſe Reformation was thought to incline more to that which was afterwards called *Puritaniſm*. For which cauſe

cauſe the Hiſtorian before mentioned, hath written, *That that King being ill principled, his Death was no infelicity to the Church of England.* The truth of the matter is, That in the firſt Times of the Queen, whoſe Reign was to be founded in the Proteſtant Religion, the Wiſdom of the State intended chiefly the bringing over of the whole Body of the People, and to ſettle them in that Profeſſion; and therefore thought fit to make no more alteration from their old Forms, then was neceſſary to be made. Care was taken, that no part of the Liturgy might be offenſive to the *Papiſts*, and they accordingly reſorted to our Divine Service for the firſt Ten years. Alſo the retaining of the Ceremonies, was a matter of condeſcention to the *Popiſh* Party, the State thereby teſtifying how far they would ſtoop to gain them, by yeelding as far as they might in their own Way. Now long Experience hath ſhewed, That what was done with reſpect to the Peace of former Times, and reconciling of *Papiſts* to *Proteſtants*, is become an occaſion of dividing *Proteſtants* from one another, without hope of converting *Papiſts*.

SECT. XIV.

The alledged Reaſons, why the Ceremonies are not to be taken away, Examined.

DIvers Reaſons are alledged to prove a continued neceſſity for theſe Ceremonies, as, *Becauſe they that are for the Church, are unwilling to have them taken away: To revoke them, is to comply with thoſe that will never be ſatisfied: Imputations have been laid upon the Things injoyned, as* Antichriſtian, Idolatrous, Superſtitious: *A Warr was undertook to remove them: And it is a reproach to the Church, whoſe Foundation is upon the Truth, to be various.* Hereunto we make anſwer: Whoſoever delight in the uſe of the Cere-

Ceremonies, may enjoy their liberty; but let it ſuffice them to uſe it, without laying a ſtumbling-block before others, or intangling their Conſciences, or hindring all of a contrary Perſwaſion from the Miniſtry, from teaching School, yea, and from taking any Academical Degree. With what ſoberneſs can it be ſaid, the *Diſſenters* will never be ſatisfied, when hitherto they were never tryed with any Relaxation or Indulgence, although they have given evident proofs of their unfeigned deſires of Accommodation? They do indeed eſteem the Ceremonies an exceſs in the Worſhip of God; but ſuppoſe that ſome have been immoderate in diſparaging thoſe Rituals; on the other hand, ſhall their value be ſo inhanſed, as to be thought more worth then the Church's Unity, and the exerciſe of mutual Charity among its Members? May not the Church ſalve her Honour, by declaring, That in remitting theſe Injunctions, ſhe meerly yeelds to the infirmity of weak Conſciences? As St. *Paul* declared concerning abſtaining from meats, who had as much power to make a Canon, as any ſort or number of Eccleſiaſtical perſons can now pretend unto. As concerning the late Warr, it is eaſier ſaid then proved, That it was undertaken to remove the Ceremonies; and it was not ſo declared by thoſe that managed it. But if it were ſo indeed, as it is here ſuggeſted, let this Argument be well weighed, A dreadful Warr that had a diſmal iſſue, was undertaken to remove certain Ceremonies that at the beſt are but indifferent, therefore let them never be removed, but ſtill inforced to the uttermoſt upon Conſciences that diſallow them. As for the reproach of the Church by the appearance of being various, we conceive the controverted Ceremonies are no Foundation of the Church of *England*, nor any ſubſtantial part of her Religion, and do therefore hope, that ſome Indulgence therein will not fix upon her any brand of Inconſtancy.

It is objected, That the *Popish* Priests would hereby take advantage. It seems then, that greater care must be taken that the *Papists*, who are implacable Adversaries, be not offended, then that many thousand honestly minded *Protestants* should be relieved. But the strangest Reason comes up last. *Dissentions about things indifferent, have necessitated the Church to make these Injunctions*: That is, say the things are but indifferent, yet great dissentions have risen about them, and are like to continue without end; therefore the Church hath been necessitated to impose them with great severity upon multitudes who esteem them unlawful, and all for this end, That dissentions may be removed. We are astonished at this Argument from the Pen of a Learned man. The truth is, these alledged Reasons have more of Animosity in them, then of Equity, Charity, or good Advice. Indeed the Apostle saith, *Mark those that cause divisions and offences contrary to the Doctrine that ye have received*; but he doth not so brand those that scruple unwritten Traditions, and needless Ceremonies, but adhere to the intire Doctrine of Christ, and all Divine Institutions.

SECT. XV.

Of the diversity of Opinion and Practice already permitted in the Church of England.

THE Moderation of the Church of *England* in the Articles of *Predestination*, *Divine Grace*, and *Free-will*, being urged against the rigorous imposition of the controverted Orders and Ceremonies, this Answer is made, *That the case is not the same, for that those points are so full of difficulty, that they, and questions of that nature, have been matter of dispute in all Ages, and in all Religions; but about the Orders and Ceremonies, this is the only thing to be resolved, Whether the Church hath power to injoin an indifferent Ceremony?*

mony? But there is no ſuch difference in the caſe. The Queſtion of things Indifferent, hath been miſtaken for the *Grand Caſe* of the *Nonconformiſts*; for thoſe points which are the main reaſon and matter of their inconformity, are by them accounted not indifferent, but unlawful, and therefore not to be admitted in their practice, till their Conſciences be better ſatisfied. And it is not irrational to think, that ſerious doubtings may ariſe in ſober minds about ſome parts of the injoyned Uniformity, and particularly, about thoſe Ceremonies which ſeem to draw near to the ſignificancy and moral efficacy of Sacraments, and thereupon may appear to ſome not as meer circumſtances, but as parts of Divine Worſhip, and their Conſciences may be ſtruck with Terror by the ſenſe of God's Jealouſie about any inſtituted Worſhip which Himſelf hath not preſcribed. Moreover, theſe Orders and Ceremonies have been matters of diſpute in all times ſince the beginning of *Proteſtant* Reformation. But under the degenerate ſtate of the Chriſtian Churches, by the great Apoſtacy of the later times, there could be no occaſion of diſputing theſe things, when Will-worſhip was generally exalted, and the groſſeſt Idolatries had prevailed.

I queſtion the truth of that Aſſertion, *That the Diſſenters cannot name one Church beſides ours, in which there was a Schiſm made for a Ceremony.* For a great Rent was made in the Chriſtian Church throughout the World, about a Ceremony, or as ſmall a matter, to wit, the time of celebrating the Feaſt of *Eaſter*. But whenſoever a Schiſm is made, let them that cauſe it, look to it, and lay it to heart. *Wo to the world becauſe of offences, and wo to that man by whom the offence cometh.* But we ſtill inſiſt upon this Argument, That theſe Rites being at the beſt but indifferent in the opinion of the Impoſers, the obſervation of them cannot in reaſon be eſteemed of ſuch importance to the ſub-

ſtance of Religion, as the different Opinions about the Articles aforeſaid are. And who knows not with what animoſity and vehemence the Parties that are called *Arminian* and *Antiarminian*, have fought againſt one another; and what dreadful and deſtructive Conſequences they pretend to draw from each others Opinions? Now put caſe the more prevalent Party in the Church of *England* ſhould go about to determine thoſe Controverſies on the one ſide, or the other, (and truly they were ſometimes determined by a Synod in His Majeſty's Dominions, namely by that of *Dublin* in the year 1615, alſo by the greateſt Prelates, and moſt eminent Doctors in *England*, in the *Lambeth-Articles*; and what hath been, may again come to paſs) would not that ſide againſt whom the Deciſion paſſeth, be ready to cry out of Oppreſſion? Yea, how great a Rent would be made by it through the whole Fabrick of this Church? Furthermore, in Ceremonies publikely uſed, and matters of open practice, the Church of *England* hath thought good to indulge *Diſſents*, as in that of bowing toward the Altar, or the Eaſt, unleſs it be required by the local Statutes of particular Societies. And in this the Sons of the Church do bear with one another, according to the direction of the Canons made in the year 1640. Unto which may be added, That the Mode of Worſhip in Cathedrals, is much different from that in Parochial Churches. Likewiſe ſome Miniſters before their Sermon uſe a Prayer of their own conceiving; others onely (as the phraſe is) bid Prayer. If theſe and other Varieties, be no reproach to our Church, will it reproach her to ſuffer one to Officiate with a Surpliſs, and another without it?

SECT.

SECT. XVI.

Men differently perſwaded in the preſent Controverſies, may live together in Peace.

IT is no vain ſpeculation, *to think we may have peace, if men perſwaded in their Conſciences that the controverted Ceremonies are ſuperſtitious, or at the beſt but Trifles, and that the Liturgy and Eccleſiaſtical Polity, need ſome Reformation, ſhould be joined with men far otherwiſe perſwaded.* And the preſerving of Peace in that caſe, doth not ſuppoſe or require *that all theſe differently perſwaded men, will be wiſe on both ſides to content themſelves with their own opinions:* But it ſuppoſeth the State, and the chief Guides of the Church, to be wiſe, (as it is always requiſite they ſhould be) and that many of Reputation and Eminency on both ſides, will be prudent and temperate, and examples of Moderation to others, (and not to ſuppoſe this is to diſparage and debaſe our preſent Age) but above all, it ſuppoſeth the Publike Conſtitution ſo well ſtated and ſetled, as to be able to curb the Imprudent and Unſober, and to encourage the Modeſt and Well-adviſed.

Surely all Diſſenters upon Conſcience, *will not be prevailed with by the ſame Conſcience, to endeavour the propagation of their own way in theſe differences, to the depreſſion of others.* If ſome offer to diſturb the Peace, can no Rule of Government reſtrain them? It is a deplorable caſe indeed, if there be no remedy but for thoſe that are favoured by the Higher Powers, utterly to exclude and reject thoſe that want the like favour and countenance.

At this day the Church of *England* by Her preſent Latitude, or at leaſt Connivence, keeps peace among Her Sons of ſuch different Perſwaſions, as formerly ſtirred up great Diſſentions in this Church. Who is ignorant of the Con-

Contentions raiſed about the *Arminian* Controverſies in the ſeveral Reigns of Queen *Elizabeth*, King *James*, and King *Charles* the Firſt? But in the preſent Times, the mutual forbearance on both ſides, but chiefly the Church's Prudence, hath lay'd aſleep thoſe Controverſies; whereas if one ſide preſuming upon its Power and Prevalency, ſhould go about (as formerly) to decry and depreſs the other, and to advance and magnifie themſelves, and ingroſs the Preferments, doubtleſs the like flames would break out again. For there is a great diſlike and abhorrency ſetled at the Heart-root of both theſe Parties againſt each others Opinions; and a ſutable occaſion would ſoon draw it out to an open Conteſtation. Now if the Church's Peace and Unity be already maintained in ſuch ſeemingly dangerous diverſity of Opinion among her Members and Officers, and thoſe not of the meaneſt rank, why ſhould her Prudence and Polity be ſuſpected as inſufficient to maintain Unity and Peace in the indulging of the differently perſwaded in the now diſputed Rites and Opinions?

SECT. XVII.

Of DISSENTERS of Narrower Principles, and of TOLERATION.

THE Latitude diſcourſed in the former Treatiſe, is unjuſtly impeached, as providing onely for the *Presbyterians*, and relinquiſhing all other Diſſenters; for it comprehends within the Eſtabliſhment, thoſe of all ſorts that are of Principles congruous to ſtated Order in the Church; ſo that no ſort is excluded, whoſe Principles make them capable. And was this Capacity any where reſtrained to the *Presbyterians*? Some *Nonconformiſts* are for Moderated *Epiſcopacy*, after the form of the Ancient Churches; and divers

divers others, as to particular forms of Government, are *Latitudinarians*; and others there are beſides theſe, who would live peaceably under the preſent Hierarchy, might they be ſpared from the perſonal profeſſion or practice of ſome things which they think unlawful or doubtful.

Moreover, beyond the Eſtabliſhed Order, the Latitude includes a Toleration for thoſe that are of ſound Faith, and good Life, but have taken up ſome Principles of Church-Government leſs congruous to National Settlement. I cannot yeeld to that poſition, *That only Neceſſity can give colour to Toleration, for that it is by the confeſſion of all, one of thoſe things that are not good in their nature.* I ſuppoſe that Chriſtians bearing with one another in tolerable differences, is a branch of Brotherly Love; and therefore Charity, as well as Neceſſity, may plead for this Way of Indulgence.

But it is objected, That *we want an inſtance of the ſafety of Toleration, in any Nation where the Supreme Governour had not a ſtanding Army to circumſcribe and confine the Heats of Diſſenters in Religion, to their own breaſts, and keep off the deſtructive Effects of Schiſm.*

Let me reply, That this Maxime, That no Toleration of Diſſenters, howſoever regulated, can be ſafely granted by the Supreme Governour that hath not a ſtanding Army, makes little for the Safety and Liberty of true Religion. The *Proteſtants* that live under the Princes of the *Roman* Faith, are little beholding to one that publiſheth to the World, That thoſe Princes can with ſafety tolerate them no longer then they keep up a ſtanding Army to keep off the deſtructive effects of that which they call Schiſm. One may ſee by this and other inſtances, what bias the Judgment hath, by the Zeal of a Party, and how it is brought to aſſert ſuch things as may expoſe the true Religion to the danger of Suppreſſion or Extirpation in many Countries.

But

But hath the *French* King leſs aſſurance of the Loyalty of His *Proteſtant* Subjects, then of the *Roman-Catholicks*? Would a Neceſſity be laid upon Him to maintain conſtant Forces to keep the *Proteſtants* in obedience, when he could rule the reſt of his People without ſuch Terror? Or is Toleration the reaſon of a ſtanding Army in the United Provinces of the *Netherlands*? In this Latitude no other Toleration is pleaded for, then what can be made ſafe and ſecure by the ordinary ways of Legal Government.

Both Duty and Intereſt obligeth all ſorts to proceed as far as it is poſſible in complying with their Superiors; and if the uncontrolable Power of Conſcience inforce them to lye without the Pale of the Eſtabliſhed Order, they ſhould deem that Excluſion their great Unhappineſs. But ſo it is, that Prudent and Pious men may be of exceeding Narrow Principles about Church-Order and Fellowſhip. Chriſtian Charity pleadeth for Indulgence towards them; and we hope Political Prudence doth not gainſay it. For although their Way may fall far ſhort of ſetling a Nation, yet they may have Spirits and Principles very conſiſtent with Publike Tranquility. And their Indulgence may be obtained by a good Underſtanding and Confidence between Them and the Higher Powers, the Clemency of the One ſhewing Favour in that extent which the Publike Order may ſafely tolerate; and the Humility and Diſcretion of the Other, cauſing them to priſe the Favour, and to uſe it rightly. That ſuch Condeſcention and Clemency ſhould be uſed on the One ſide, and ſuch Humility and Modeſty on the Other, why ſhould it ſeem impoſſible? For the One may ſee, that by granting ſome Limited Liberty, the Protection of Chriſts Flock, and the Satisfaction of well-minded Subjects may become more Univerſal: And the Other may likewiſe ſee, that a ſmaller Party, and thoſe of Narrow Principles, are of them-

themſelves in no wiſe proportionable to the State of this Nation; and therefore that they cannot well ſubſiſt, but in conjunction with, and ſubordination unto an Eſtabliſhment more commenſurate to the whole Body of the People. This neceſſary Subordination, may beget a mutual Confidence and Security. If it be ſaid, The Tolerated Party may become Dangerous or Suſpected, it is always ſuppoſed that they ſtand by their Good Behaviour, and the Rulers Favour. But they are not like to prove Dangerous, if the Eſtabliſhment be large enough. For the Narrowneſs thereof makes the *Diſſenters* numerous, and ſtill encreaſeth their Number.

SECT. XVIII.

It is the Intereſt of the NONCONFORMISTS *to prefer Comprehenſion before Toleration, where Conſcience doth not gainſay.*

IF it can be made evident, That the *Nonconformiſts* ſhould embrace a Comprehenſion as the ſureſt means of their particular Good, it will conduce exceedingly to evince, That the Favour of Rulers will not be in vain towards them; and that their Petitions, Diſcourſes, and other Inſtances for Moderation, were not feigned, becauſe grounded on their true Intereſt that cannot lye.

Were they united among themſelves, and did the Times highly favour them, even then it were their Wiſdom not to inſiſt too far upon their own Perſwaſions, but to comply with ſuch moderate Order as is moſt paſſable in the Nation, (their Conſciences not gainſaying) much more doth it now behove them, by Moderation and Submiſſion to diſpoſe themſelves for the Favour of their Superiors.

They ſhould chuſe rather (if it be poſſible for them) to be Comprehended in the Approved, then to be Tolerated

in a Severed Way. For there is not ſo much loſt thereby in point of Liberty, but as much or more is gained in point of Safety.

It is a happineſs to be ſecured from dangerous wanderings, perplexities, breaches, and manifold inconveniences, into which they may be led that are wholly left without the Line of the Eſtabliſhed Order. Thoſe perſons that by their Wiſdom and Learning can the better defend themſelves from the aforeſaid Evils in a ſevered State, cannot be ignorant how precipitate and unadviſable many of their Number may be, and not ſo eaſily to be governed by their more prudent Guides. Men of diſcerning and ſtable judgments, would do their uttermoſt to preſerve the more inconſiderate people from falling into a full and abſolute Separation from all Chriſtian Societies that are not of their Perſwaſion. For they may eaſily apprehend into how great and dangerous Errors that *Vortex* may carry about thoſe that fall into it.

They that are beſt able to govern themſelves, do ſee moſt need of a Publike Government, and how neceſſary it is, that both People and Teachers be under the Regulation and Influence of Authority, for the avoiding of many and great Inconveniencies. And there are many and great Benefits, by being comprehended in the Approved Order, not otherwiſe to be obtained. Their Peace is better inſured, their Influence is more diffuſive, their Inſtances and Motions for the Common Good, will be more regarded. They have a larger ſcope for imploying their Maſters Talent in the Publike Service of the Goſpel, and they may ſpeak with more Authority, and better ſucceſs among all ranks and ſorts of men, who will look upon them as theirs, when they hold their Publike Stations.

Unto all this may be added, That the Ancient *Nonconformiſts* earneſtly oppoſed the Separation of the *Browniſts*, and

and held communion with the Church of *England* in its Publike Worſhip.

And doubtleſs it is the Miniſters Intereſt, not to have their Subſiſtence by the Arbitrary Benevolence of the people, and ſo to live in continual dependance upon their mutable diſpoſitions for a Maintenance that is poor and low in compariſon of the Publike Encouragements. Hereby one may partly judg, whether Learned and Prudent men be *Nonconformiſts* by the pleaſure of their own will, or the conſtraining-force of Conſcience.

Now their Conſciences may be relieved, if they be not made perſonally to profeſs or practice any thing againſt the dictates thereof. And retaining their own private judgments, they may well hold to this Catholick Principle, That in a Church acknowledged to be ſound in Doctrine, and in the Subſtance or main Parts of Divine Worſhip, and not defective in any vital part of Chriſtian Religion, they are bound to bear with much which they take to be amiſs in others Practice, in which they do not perſonally bear a part themſelves.

As concerning a Form of Church-Government, and Rule of Diſcipline, Men that underſtand their own Intereſt, cannot for ſelf-ends (as they have been upbraided) covet the Power of ſuch a Diſcipline as inevitably procures envy and ill-will, without any temporal profit or dignity. And if the Higher Powers will not admit ſuch a Form, (I deliver my own private judgment, without prejudice to other mens) this may tend to ſatisfie the Subjects Conſcience. That Eccleſiaſtical Government is neceſſarily more directed and ordered in the exerciſe thereof, by the Determinations of the Civil Magiſtrate, in places where the true Religion is maintained, then where it is perſecuted or diſregarded. And they that have received the Power, muſt anſwer to God for it: They that

are discharged from it, shall never account for that whereof they have been bereaved.

SECT. XIX.

It behooves both the Comprehended and the Tolerated, to prefer the common Interest of Religion, and the setling of the Nation, before their own particular Perswasions.

AS those *Dissenters*, whose Consciences will permit, will best comply with their own good, by entring into the Establishment, if a door be open for their access: So they of Narrower Principles, that cannot enter into it, will be safest within the Limits of such Indulgence as Authority would vouchsafe to grant them, with respect to the Common Good. Men of all Perswasions should rather chuse to be limited by Publike Rules, with mutual Confidence between their Governors and Themselves, then to be left to the liberty of their own Affections, upon terms uncertain and unsecure.

Besides the Concernment of their own Peace, there is this great Perswasive, That this Advice is a compliance with that state of things which will best satisfie and settle the Nation, and maintain Reformed Religion against Popery, and Christianity against Atheism and Infidelity.

True *Englishmen*, and Lovers of their dear Countrey, which is impaired and reproached by these breaches, should yeeld as much to its Wealth and Honour, as their Consciences can allow. Loyal Subjects and good Patriots should consider what the Kingdom will bear, and prefer such bounded Liberty of Comprehension and Indulgence, as tends to Union, before a loose, though larger Liberty, that will keep the Breaches open, and the Minds of People unquiet and unsetled. And it is not of little moment to mind this, That the high Concerns of Conscience cannot

not be better ſecured then in the Peace and Safety of the excellent Conſtitution of this Kingdom.

For the Amplitude of Reformed Religion, all true Proteſtants ſhould promote an ample Eſtabliſhme t thereof, both for the incompaſſing of all that be ſound in that Profeſſion, as alſo for the more capacious reception of thoſe that may become Converts thereunto. And not onely the encreaſe and glory thereof, but its ſtability in theſe Dominions, is promoted by ſuch an ample Eſtabliſhment. Witneſs our great Defence againſt *Popery*, by the common zeal of all *Proteſtants* of the ſeveral Perſwaſions, for *Proteſtancy* in general. By this concurrent Zeal, the inſolencies of the *Papiſts* have been repreſſed, and their Confidences defeated. Could the *Proteſtant Conformiſts* or *Nonconformiſts*, either of them upon their own ſingle account, if one ſhould exterminate, or utterly diſable the other, be ſo well ſecured againſt *Popery*, as now they are by their common Intereſt? And to imagine by rigor to compel the depreſſed Party to incorporate with the Party advanced, ſo that one ſhould acquire the Strength of both, would in the iſſue be found a great Error. By ſuch proceeding, indeed, a Party may be wounded and broken, and rendred unſerviceable to the common good, but ſhall never be gained as an addition of Strength to thoſe who have ſo handled them. But an Accommodation would make both to be as one. And ſeeing in their preſent divided ſtate, the concurrent Zeal of Both hath been ſo formidable, as to daſh the hopes of the *Popiſh* Party, how much more in a ſtate of Union, might their Strength increaſe againſt their common Adverſaries! Wherefore, the One ſhould open the Way, and the Other ſhould readily come in upon juſt Terms. This ſhould be the rather minded on both ſides, becauſe the Conſiderate *Nonconformiſts* will never promote their own Liberty by ſuch ways and means as would bring in a Toleration

leration of *Popery*; yea, they would rather help to bear up the preſent Eccleſiaſtical ſtate, then that *Popery* ſhould break in by *Anarchy*, or the Diſſolution of all Church-Government.

Moreover, an ample, fixed ſtate Eccleſiaſtical, is neceſſary to uphold and encreaſe true Religion, as well againſt *Infidelity*, as againſt *Popery*. The looſe part of the World would turn to a wearineſs and contempt of Divine Inſtitutions, and Chriſtianity it ſelf would be much endangered in a ſtate of Ataxy and unfixedneſs. By what ordinary means hath the Doctrine and Inſtitution of Chriſt been propagated and perpetuated in large Kingdoms and Nations, and in the Univerſe, but by incompaſſing under its external Rule and Order, great Multitudes that may fall ſhort of the Life and Power thereof. And it doth not root and ſpread in any ſort conſiderable, in a Region, where the external Order is ſet by the Rigid and Narrow Principles of a ſmall Party, and the general Multitude lyes open as waſt ground, for any to invade or occupy. Let conſiderate men judg how much the ample ſtate of a meer Orthodox Profeſſion, is to be preferred before *Infidelity*, or *Popery*, or any other Sect of the Chriſtian Name, that is Idolatrous or Heretical. There be few Converts to the Power of Godlineſs, from Infidelity or Popery, or any Hereſie, but they are generally made out of the Maſs of People of an Orthodox Profeſſion.

If it be the will of God that one muſt ſuffer for the Cauſe of Religion, it is more for the Honour of Chriſtianity to ſuffer from Infidels, then from *Papiſts*; likewiſe it is more for the Honour of Reformed Religion, to ſuffer from *Papiſts*, then from *Proteſtants*. And if it were at ones own choice, One ſhould much rather (*cæteris paribus*) ſuffer in defence of the main Truths of *Chriſtianity*, then for refuſing a Ceremony, or for any other part of *Inconformity*.

formity. For this cauſe a Union is ſo deſirable, that theſe Bitterneſſes, Reproaches and Scandals, might ceaſe from among us.

Laſtly, Whatſoever Enlargement we have granted by the Favour of our Lawful Superiors, we have it in the beſt way, and a Bleſſing is in it.

SECT. XX.

EPISCOPACY will gain more by Moderation, then by Severity in theſe Differences.

THE *Anſwerer* enumerates many Reaſons why *a Form of Church-Government ſhould meet with many Difficulties in its return after a proſcription of Twenty years*; and concludes *it muſt be a Generation or two, not ſeven years, that can wear out all thoſe Difficulties.* On the other ſide he ſaith, *Presbytery languiſhed almoſt as ſoon as it had a being*, &c. I perceive *Presbytery* is a great Eye-ſore. Peradventure I may be reckoned a *Presbyterian*; and to ſay the truth, I am not aſhamed of their company that are commonly called by that Name; yet I have no pleaſure in ſuch Names of diſtinction. I am of a *Perſwaſion*, but not of a *Party*; and whatſoever my *Perſwaſion* be, it is Moderate, Catholick and Pacifick. Neither my Deſign nor my Principles engage me to maintain the *Presbyterial* Government. Nevertheleſs I cannot but take notice with how little reaſon the intrinſick Strength of *Prelacy*, or Weakneſs of *Presbytery*, is argued from the duration of the one and the other in this Kingdom. Had *Presbytery* the Strength of the Civil Power? Or was it ever formed in *England*? Was it not cruſh'd while it was an *Embryo*, by the prevailing Potency of its Adverſaries? Look into thoſe States where it hath been Eſtabliſhed, if you would judg aright concerning it. On the other hand, hath not *Prelacy* had

had all the Strength of Law and Power engaged in its defence, by the Encouragements of Worldly Grandure for its Favourers, and by Severities inflicted on its Impugners for above Fourſcore years? In which ſpace of time, none could appear againſt it without the hazard of utter undoing, or great Suffering. And though it were thus born up, not for Seven years, but almoſt a Century, yet we do not find that it had worn out the Difficulties of thoſe Times, which were not ſo Many and Great as this Author reports its preſent Difficulties to be, in its return after a proſcription of Twenty years. But there is a more excellent and ſurer Way, which, it is hoped, may attain to a happier End in leſs time then a *Generation or two.* If the Diſtemper of Minds were healed, and Unchriſtian Enmities laid aſide, then Moderation being ſincerely begun, would hold on, and make the Diſagreeing Parties to be ſtill more yeelding, and mutually obliging; thoſe Provocations and Prejudices would then ceaſe, by which they have been mutually alienated, and hurried into ſuch Hoſtilities, and they would not be tempted in their own Defence (as they think) to ſtrengthen themſelves by Evil Advantages.

If *Epiſcopacy* yeeld to a Moderate Courſe, why ſhould any prudent *Diſſenters* go about to moleſt it? For in ſo doing they would but perpetuate their own trouble and unquiet ſtate, ſeeing that diverſities of Opinions, and occaſions of Diſcord are like to continue about Forms of Church-Government, until Forms ſhall be no more. On the other ſide, Why ſhould the *Epiſcopal* Clergy dread that Moderation that would render *Epiſcopacy* more generally inoffenſive and acceptable, and put ſome end to the hitherto unceaſſant ſtruglings againſt it? Are they jealous that the Structure of their Government may be weakned, and at length diſſolved? They might rather apprehend it might gain Aſſiſtance and Reputation from many that now

now either by conſtraint and neceſſity, or by provocation and prejudice are made its Adverſaries. Who ſo ſearcheth to the root of the matter, ſhall find, That not ſo much the *Species* of Government, nor the Forms that are uſed as weightier matters, have been the chief ſtumbling-block, and the occaſions of the greateſt diſguſt and averſation. Neither the *Epiſcopal* Office nor Habit, doth affright this ſort of People from hearing a Biſhop preach to their Edification.

The right and ſure way to eſtabliſh *Epiſcopacy* in a Land where *Reformed Chriſtianity* is eſtabliſhed, is not to urge preciſe Conformity in Opinions and Orders, and doubtful things of meer human determination; but to encourage ſoundneſs in the Faith, Ability and Induſtry in the proper Work of the Miniſtry, and a Converſation becoming the Goſpel; and to diſcourage Pluralities, Nonreſidencies, Licentiouſneſs and Idleneſs in all ſorts, who ſerve not Chriſt, but themſelves, in their Sacred Functions, and whoſe End is onely to live in Pomp, Wealth and Pleaſure. Will the Church-Governors ſay (as it hath been anſwered) *they are bound up by the Laws; and if Patrons preſent unworthy perſons which have the Qualifications the Law requires, the Biſhops muſt not reject them; nor can they turn them out at their pleaſure, but muſt give an account to the Laws.* To this I reply, If the Admiſſion and Permiſſion of unworthy Miniſters, comes to paſs not by the Biſhops Adminiſtration, but by the defectiveneſs of the Laws, why hath not their Zeal excited them in the ſpace of ſo many years, and ſeveral Princes Reigns, to endeavour the obtaining of Laws effectual on that behalf, as it hath to procure and make, from time to time, ſtricter and ſtricter Injunctions about Conformity and Ceremonies? For we know no reaſon why as full and vigorous Laws may not be made againſt Ignorant, Negligent and Scandalous Mi-

niſters, as againſt *Nonconformiſts*. Conſcience, Honour and Safety, obligeth the *Epiſcopal* Clergy to turn the edg of their Diſcipline the right way, and to ſhew its energy and vigor, not about Ceremonies, but the great and weighty matters of Chriſtian Religion. And I believe that many worthy Miniſters of the *Church of England*, are ſo perſwaded. Wherefore, in the former Diſcourſe I caſt no evil reflection upon the *Latitudinarians*, or any moderate perſons; nor repreſented them *as conforming not ſincerely, and as becomes the Miniſters of Chriſt*. They may ſincerely, according to their Principles, ſubmit to theſe Impoſitions, and yet not like the Impoſing. The expreſſion of their *lukewarmneſs in Conformity*, ſignified no more but this, That they ſet a rate upon theſe Matters according to the value, and that they bear but an indifferent reſpect to things that at the beſt are but indifferent.

It is objected againſt me, That *having provided a place of reſt for my ſelf and my Party, in the ſtated Order, I am little ſollicitous for others*. I do here ſolemnly profeſs, That I am chiefly ſollicitous for the Tranquility and Reſt of a troubled Nation. As for my own Concernment, my Deprivation is an Affliction to me; and I would do any thing that were not ſin to me, to recover the liberty of my publike Service in the Church: But if it cannot be, I ſubmit to His good pleaſure, by whoſe determinate Counſel all things are brought to paſs, and am contented to remain a Silenced Sufferer *for Conſcience towards God*. Yea, I ſhould much rejoice in ſuch Enlargement of the Publike Rule, as might give a ſafe entrance to others, though I my ſelf by ſome invincible ſtrictneſs of Apprehenſion, ſhould remain excluded; for I have no Faction to uphold, and by others Gain I am nothing leſſened. And in my opinion, it will be no dividing of the *Nonconformiſts*, or weakning of their Intereſt, if a part of them might cloſe with the Approved Order

Order of the Nation, enlarged to the latitude of their judgments, when others of ſtreighter judgments are left without. Indeed, if they were a Faction, they might loſe or leſſen themſelves hereby: But Reformed Chriſtianity is their Grand Intereſt, and their main Cauſe lyes not in any avowed difference of Doctrines between them and the *Epiſcopal Proteſtants*, nor in any Secular Advantages to hold to themſelves in a divided ſtate, but in the Advancement of Gods Kingdom by the encreaſe of true Chriſtian Faith and Piety.

The *Anſwerer* hath uſed many hard ſpeeches againſt me, and charged me with Malice in divers paſſages, which I anſwer not in particular, becauſe the innocence and inoffenſiveneſs of my words will clear it ſelf; and becauſe I would not make this *Diſcourſe* tedious, by replying to things impertinent to the main ſcope. It ſhall ſuffice me to add, That I have written theſe things, as knowing that *the Judg ſtandeth before the Dore.*

FINIS.

XUM

The Contents.

Sect 1. *OF the Foundation of our Peace already laid in the Religion of the Nation, and the Structure thereof, to be perfected by the Unity of that Profession.*

2. *The Good of the several Parties is best secured by Common Equity, and the Good of the Universality.*

3. *What may be esteemed a good Constitution of the State Ecclesiastical.*

4. *The Comprehensiveness of the Establishment, and the allowance of a just Latitude of Dissents, is the best Remedy against Dissentions.*

5. *Whether the present Dissentions are but so many Factions in the State.*

6. *Whether the* Nonconformists *Principles tend to Sects and Schisms.*

7. *Of their Principles touching Obedience and Government.*

8. *Of placing them in the same rank for Crime and Guilt, with the Papists.*

9. *Whether their Inconformity be Conscientious or Wilful.*

10. *Of their peaceable Inclinations, and readiness to be satisfied.*

11. *The propounded Latitude leaves out nothing necessary to secure the Churches Peace.*

12. *Of acquiescence in the Commands of Superiors, and the proper matter of their Injunctions.*

13. *Of the alledged Reasons of the Ecclesiastical Injunctions in the beginning of the Reformation.*

14. *The alledged Reasons why the Ceremonies are not to be taken away, Examined.*

15 *Of the diversity of Opinion and Practice already permitted in the Church of* England.

16. *Men differently perswaded in the present Controversies, may live together in peace.*

17. *Of Dissenters of narrower Principles and of Toleration.*

18. *It is the Interest of the Nonconformists to prefer Comprehension before Toleration, where Conscience doth not gainsay.*

19. *It behoves both the Comprehended and the Tolerated to prefer the common Interest of Religion, and the setling of the Nation, before their own particular Perswasions.*

20. *Episcopacy will gain more by Moderation, then by Severity in these Differences.*